

House Republicans Step Closer to a DHS Shutdown that Threatens Our Security

In just four days, the Department of Homeland Security will run out of funding and shut down, putting national security at risk at a time when we face threats at home and abroad. As we approach the looming February 27 deadline, Democrats unanimously support a clean bill at the funding levels agreed to by both parties in December that would keep DHS open. Meanwhile, House Republicans remain deeply divided as GOP leaders refuse to bring a clean bill to the Floor to prevent a shutdown, much to the dismay of many of their Republican colleagues:

Former Republican Governor and first DHS Secretary Tom Ridge: “‘It irritates the hell out of me,’ Tom Ridge, the first Homeland Security secretary and a former two-term Pennsylvania governor, said in an interview. ‘I think it is political folly. I think it is bad policy. I think the political repercussions could be very severe. And on top of that, the men and women of Homeland Security deserve better.’” [Los Angeles Times, [2/22/15](#)]

In the last two weeks, Republicans in the House and Senate have expressed their strong disagreement with these political games and are urging Republican leaders to pass a clean bill to fund DHS without delay:

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN): “We need to figure out a way to get [DHS] funded...” [Washington Post, [2/24/15](#)]

House Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Chairman and former Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security Peter King (R-NY): “If I have to vote against Republicans, I will... If I have to vote against the Republican leadership, I will. I’m not going to see another 9/11... The threat from terrorism is greater than at any time since 9/11... The worst thing we can do is let our enemies think we are backing off, that we are cutting off funding... This involves human lives and this is too risky a game to be playing here.” [CBS New York, [2/23/15](#)]

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC): “...for God’s sake, don’t shut down the premier homeland security defense line called the Department of Homeland Security. If we do, as Republicans, we’ll get blamed.” [National Review, [2/23/15](#)]

House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX): “I fully believe we should be not be playing politics with the national security agency like the Department of Homeland Security particularly given the high threat environment that we’re in right now as we look at ISIS, as we look at this latest pronouncement coming out of al-Shabaab ... I’m very concerned that a Paris-style attack could occur in the United States, anytime, anywhere. And it would be irresponsible for lawmakers and policy makers to shut down this National Security Agency at this very grave time.” [The Hill, [2/23/15](#)]

Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI): “The political impasse on DHS funding must end. Responsible members of both parties must work together to find some way to fund DHS without further delay.” [CQ Roll Call, [2/23/15](#)]

Senator John McCain (R-AZ): “It’s not a good idea to shut down the Department of Homeland Security.” [The Hill, [2/19/15](#)]

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL): “‘We have to fund Homeland Security,’ Rubio said at a press conference in Las Vegas, according to the Las Vegas Review-Journal. ‘We can’t let Homeland Security shut down.’... Rubio suggested that Republicans should find another path forward for funding DHS now that Senate Democrats are blocking legislation that would roll back President Obama’s executive actions on immigration.” [The Hill, [2/18/15](#)]

But instead of taking bipartisan action to fund DHS and ensure the agency has the resources needed to keep America safe, Republican leaders are more focused on pointing fingers at one another than governing responsibly:

“It’s hard to grasp the logic that would impel GOP lawmakers to suspend funding for the gigantic department [of Homeland Security]... The answer, it seems, is that **the fervor of Republican partisanship, especially in the House, is immune to logic beyond an insistence on victory at any cost — the cost in this case being the imminent shutdown of a critical chunk of the federal government...** On taking control of both houses of Congress, Republican leaders pledged to avoid further government shutdowns. They then set precisely the opposite course — a course seemingly designed to prove **they are incapable of governing.**” [Washington Post, [2/24/15](#)]

“After promising an era of responsible governing and an end to federal shutdowns, congressional Republicans find themselves mired in an immigration fight that could cause funding for the Department of Homeland Security to run out on Friday. It is a risky moment for the new congressional majority. A nasty partisan impasse over funding for a vital agency would probably damage the party’s brand just months after Republicans took power, and the impact could carry over into the next election cycle. ‘I don’t think shutdowns and showdowns are the way to win the presidency in 2016,’ said Representative Tom Cole, an Oklahoma Republican and a respected party strategist... The prospect of an agency shutdown was seen as almost laughable until recently, most notably because Republicans are typically predisposed to fund security matters. But now the chances are increasingly serious... **Many Republicans acknowledge that they will get most of the blame, just as they did in October 2013** — and, for that matter, in 1995 during the shutdown in the Clinton administration.” [New York Times, [2/24/15](#)]

“Congressional Republicans remained sharply divided Monday over how to fund the Department of Homeland Security, prompting White House officials to begin preparations for a potential shutdown of the agency this weekend... **Outside conservative groups, including Heritage Action, have been pushing Republicans not to not approve a ‘clean’ funding plan,** demanding that any DHS budget include the immigration provisions that would reverse Obama’s actions... **Senior Senate Republicans said a DHS shutdown would be a political debacle given the increased violence in the Middle East and new threats of attack against U.S. and European shopping malls.**” [Washington Post, [2/24/15](#)]

“The blame game is beginning to ramp up ahead of the Feb. 27 deadline for funding DHS and associated agencies like the Coast Guard, the U.S. Customs Service and the Secret Service... The funding battle comes as al-Shabab called for terrorist attacks at malls across the United States, including the Mall of America in Minnesota.” [The Hill, [2/23/15](#)]

Continued Republican infighting and inaction are threatening the resources needed to fund the following areas critical to our security:

Frontline Personnel: A DHS shutdown would force front-line security personnel to work without pay, undermining the morale of the workforce responsible for keeping communities safe, including frontline operational and support personnel at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Transportation Security Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Law Enforcement Training: A DHS shutdown would halt law enforcement training, restricting the Department’s ability to train new hires who would be working to secure the border and screen passengers.

State and Local Preparedness: A DHS shutdown would impair FEMA’s ability to prepare for future disasters by furloughing personnel who work on grant programs that help states and communities improve their ability to respond to terrorism, disasters, and other emergencies.

Research & E-Verify: A DHS shutdown would hurt commerce by restricting the Department’s ability to sustain E-Verify, the system that lets employers voluntarily determine whether prospective employees are eligible to work in the United States. All research & development activities would be halted.

Transportation Security Administration: A DHS shutdown would withhold paychecks from TSA personnel charged with screening operations to ensure flight security and effectively screen passengers and luggage every day at more than 450 airports throughout the United States. Approximately 10 percent, or 5,500, of the TSA workforce would be furloughed.

[Information on impacts provided by the Department of Homeland Security]